

About this zine!

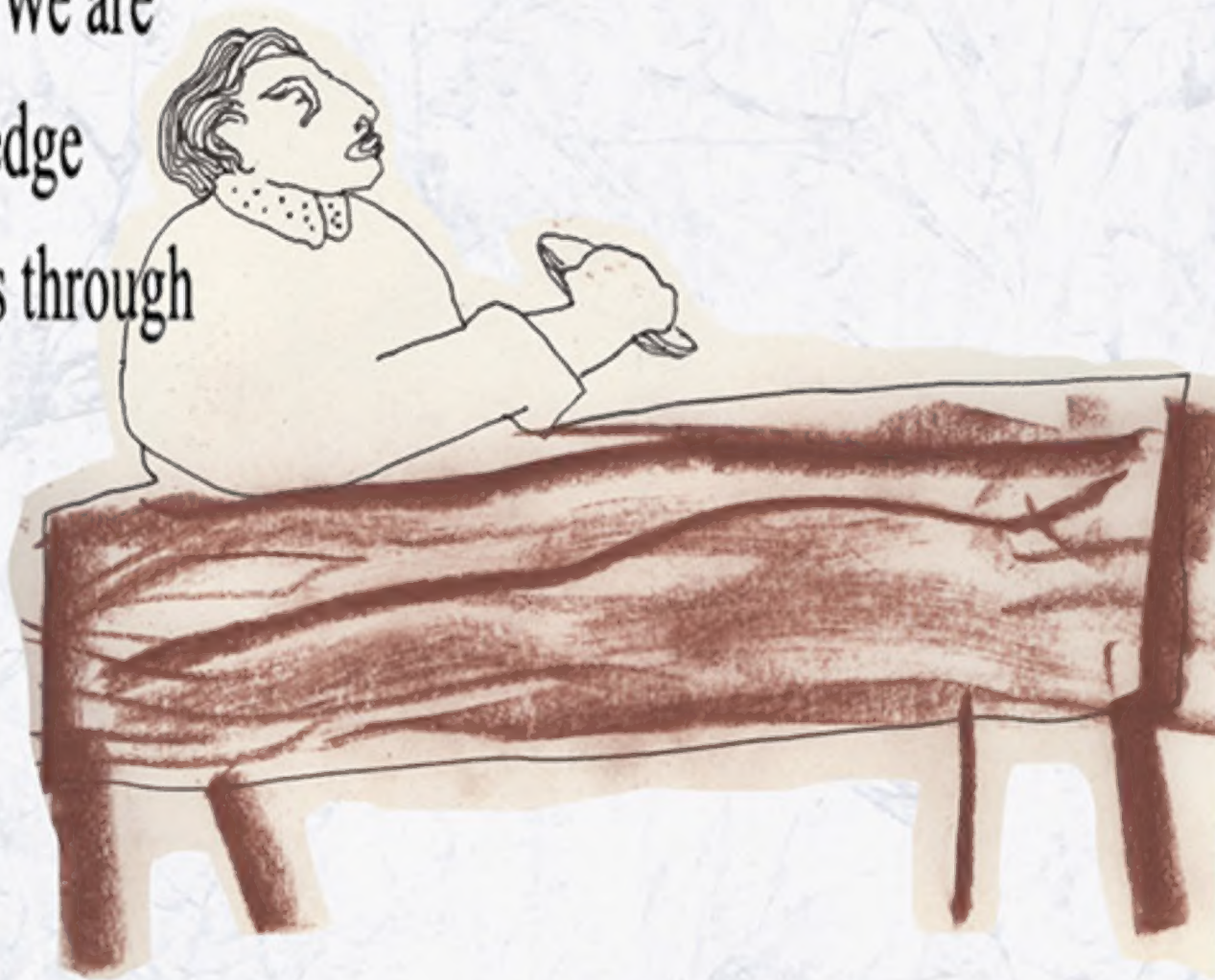
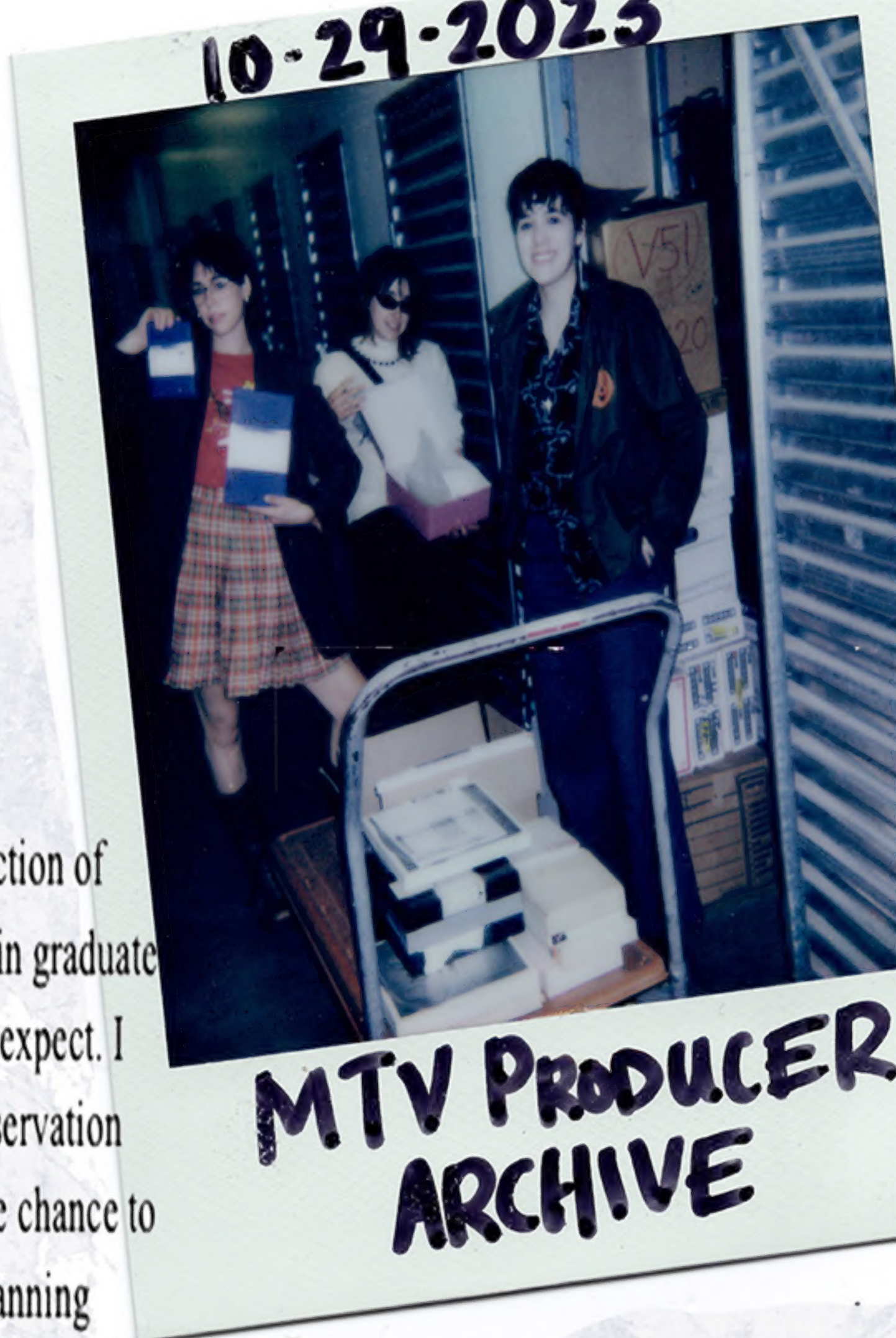
We made this zine in Fall 2023 as part of an independent study at UCLA's MLIS (Master of Library of Information Studies) program. We are media archives students, studying the preservation of sound and moving images. We partnered with Deserted Films, a home movie archive in Palm Springs, to digitize a small collection of amateur films made by a woman named Betty Stefanell in the 1940s and 1950s. We inspected, cleaned, repaired, and digitized these films in partnership with the Information Studies Media Lab and Center for Audiovisual Heritage at UCLA. We made this zine as a catalyst for analog film preservation and the value of a DIY approach to caring for such important items.

Gabz: When my grandmother passed away in 2021, my father brought home a collection of Super 8mm home movies that he rediscovered in her home. During my first quarter in graduate school, he gave the films to me, kicking off a new pathway in my education I didn't expect. I learned that my grandfather had documented our family's life on the Pala Indian Reservation during the 1970s. I not only gained an insight into my father's childhood, but had the chance to see other family members through a new lens. With access to film inspection and scanning equipment, I was able to return these memories back to my father, aunts, and cousins and see first hand the emotional and empowering effect of the personal moving image on the people who were depicted. Home movies play an integral part in forming our relations to the past and imagining our futures, and as Indigenous people, they are a tool of healing cultural and familial trauma. The trajectory of my professional education and training has equipped me to center the role of home movies to perpetuate memory and influence legacy.

Jackie: My grandfather would often be found with his right eye glued to a camera lens, shouting out "one, two, three—okay again—one, two, three!" in his thick Polish accent. He made home movies and photographed his life for 70+ years. My professional media archival aspirations began, as they do for many, with my family's moving image collection. Before starting graduate school for media preservation, I was entirely disconnected from the skills and knowledge I needed, alienating me from these items that were so critical to my sense of lineage. Access to the skills to preserve my family's history has proved to be an emotional and moving project, bringing my family together to celebrate media otherwise locked away due to technological obsolescence. The gap between us and our media is one I think about frequently, and much of my professional aspirations revolve around closing that gap for others.

D: Nana D'Acquisto, at 95 years old, had an array of Super 8 & 8mm reels stored in her sister's garage in Mission Hills, San Diego. She implored me to take them. There was no way for her to tell if they were in any shape to be projected, no other means of viewing them. With the access I have to a media lab on campus, I've been able to transfer five of our family's films. I was able to show them in the format of digital files to my dad, who is featured in at least one of the films as an infant. Being able to see himself held by his recently passed father let him expose a vulnerability in himself that had been present but restrained for so long. It united a fleeting memory with a visualized sensation of affection he received in the past that moved him. We are regularly alienated from our home movies due to format obsolescence and hence knowledge obsolescence—a process that in this field I desire to counteract, bringing people to access through radical pedagogy and deprofessionalization of skills needed to preserve these materials.

About us!



Reel Talk

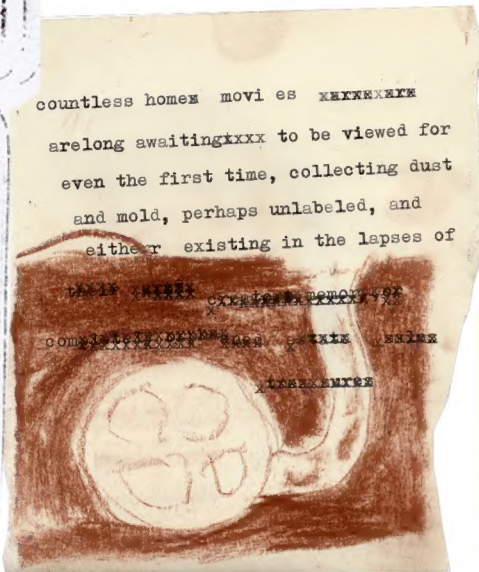
home MOVIES



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your home movies matter

Most of us are not primarily educated in how the media which houses our earliest memories degrade — and that should just fall into good housekeeping.

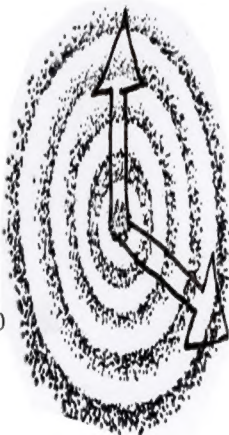


Countless home movies are long waiting to be viewed for even the first time, collecting dust and mold, perhaps unlabeled, and either existing in the lapses of their creators' memory, artifacts of a past relationship to a creator, or completely unrelated as estate sale treasures.



This zine is not only a guide on preserving home movies on analog film formats, but we would like to also make it a call for considering what home movies you come across on your own (be it at your grandparents' house or an estate sale) what we call in the biz a preservation priority.

These otherwise alienated scenes of everyday life which tend to take place off-the-clock can generate discussion about the variations of qualities of life and play between each other. This kind of education, not only of the self in relation to one's own past but pitting upbringings in relation to each other is a radical act which we feel can contribute to social transformation



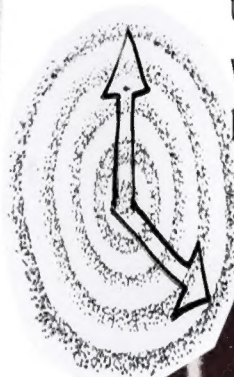
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access

Training to handle film is only offered within specialized fields that are growing ever more narrow and niche. Film preservation work is typically designated to an outsourced party as specialized labor with no intimate relation to the materials.



A profession for everyone

Why give up on training people to handle degrading media formats which hold the memories of aging generations? Why are these formats rendered obsolete in our age of digital filmmaking and production?



home movies, we don't just mean video

Let's create a civic culture that still values analog film as a medium.

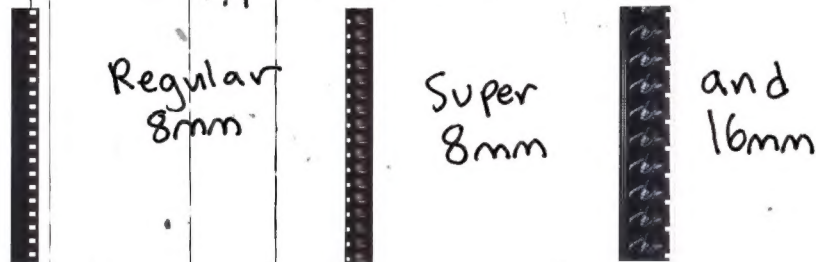


ORIGINAL

ORIGINAL

IDENTIFYING Film TYPES

Amateur and home movies are usually on three types of film:



This is different from your favorite feature films, which can be found on

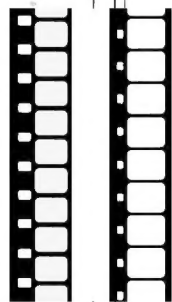


35mm

or even



70mm!



8mm has large Perforations and a smaller frame, as compared to Super8's smaller perforations and larger frame



16mm is even BIGGER and can have single or double



Sometimes they have like these: Soundtracks



Variable area



Variable density



Magnetic Strip

KODAK & DUPONT films have

tiny symbols in the perforation area that tell you the kind of stock, like

EASTMAN → KODACHROME → KODAK PXR/TR

and the year the stock was manufactured

16mm edge codes look the same as 8mm edgecodes, but actually mean different years.

(until after 1964 when the edgecodes switched to meaning the same for both.)

KODAK edge codes repeat every 20 years

an edgecode like Δ+ can mean 1930, 1950, or 1970

So using context clues about the history or content of the film can be helpful.



IDENTIFYING EDGE codes



f i l m

i n s p e c t i o n

e q u i p m e n t

Film Rewinds

designed to view
film manually, inspect
for damage, make repairs,
& wind film onto
reels
(See Figures 1 & 2)

Film Reels

50 feet
"Straight from
the developer"
Usually 1 film
~ 3 minutes
for Super 8

200 ft
spliced
together
films
~ 13 min
for Super 8

Spliced together
~ 26 min
400 ft for Super 8

Adapters

plastic
pieces to
fit reels
onto rewinds
& projectors

Clamps

to attach rewinds
to the table

Lightbox

for seeing image
(or your phone's flashlight)

Splicer

repair damage: broken
Splice attach leader
can also be done by
hand with an X-acto
knife and cutting
mat

Archival Leader
attach to start &
end of film to
protect
from debris

Archival Tape

Comes in
all sizes!
Prevent ooze!
Scotch Dust Masking

Magnifying Loupe
to see image
on small
gauges

Figure 1-1. Camera and Components

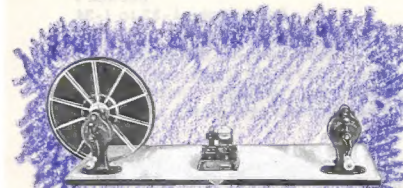
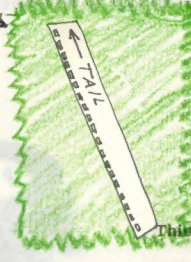
FIG. 1 - FILM REWIND
Super 8/8mmFIG. 2 - MOVIE VIEWER
A.K.A. "MOVIOLA"FIG. 2 -
ARCHIVAL LEADERFIG. 3 - REWIND
ADAPTERSFIG. 4 - PROJECTOR/
MOVIE VIEWER ADAPTER

FIG. 5 - CLAMPS

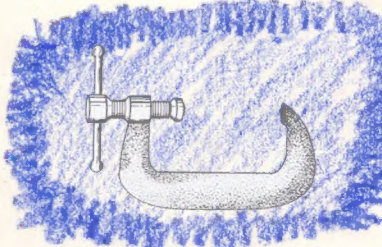
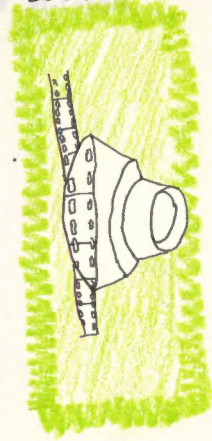
FIG. 8
ARCHIVAL
TAPE

FIG. 6 - LIGHT BOX

FIG. 9 - Super 8mm
Splicer (CIRCO)FIG. 10 - 16mm
SplicerFIG. 7 -
MAGNIFYING
LOUPE

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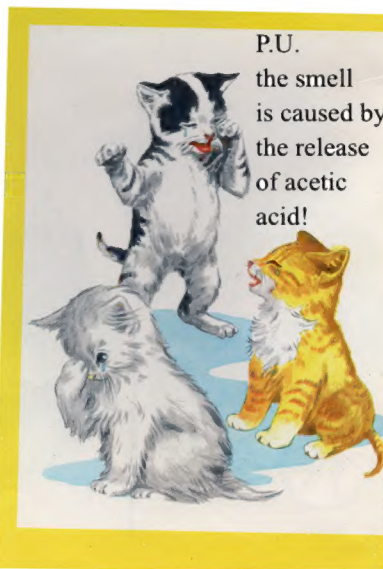
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Since home movie formats are exclusively safety film stock, it's important to know the signs of acetate decay. Celluloid Acetate is the species of film we're usually dealing with here.

VINEGAR SYNDROME

If you open up a can or whatever storage unit your film resides in and it immediately flares up your nostrils to a rancid vinegar stench, you're most likely dealing with a film that has Vinegar Syndrome. Films with vinegar syndrome can shrink, dry up, and become brittle to the touch. If you notice signs of this on your film, isolate it from the rest of the material in your home collection. Films which are far along in the process of this form of decay cannot be projected due to the warping of the film and shrunken sprocket holes. You can still inspect and handle this film.



MOLD!

You might also notice traces of white growth or a powdery substance on one of your reels. If you see mold on your film, ISOLATE it from the rest of your films in your collection. The spores, depending on how much have spread, can also affect the way you wind through film— the residue makes film stick to itself. Winding through to sticky films with mold needs to be done carefully otherwise the emulsion can be torn off!

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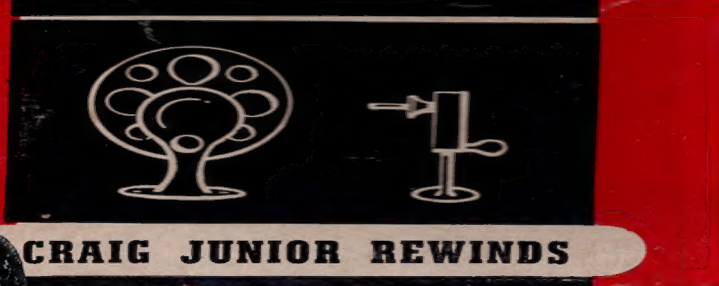
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PROJECTION RELATED DAMAGE!

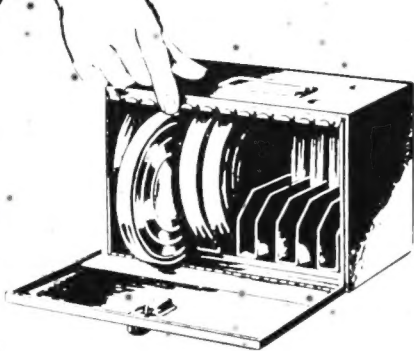
If you have film rewinds, it will be a lot easier to check your film for broken or torn perforations. This damage is from projection. Simply hold a gloved hand to your film Italian-style around the edges and wind through your film. You should be able to feel if you have a broken perf if it snags on your glove. In order to repair the damage, you will need to splice it.



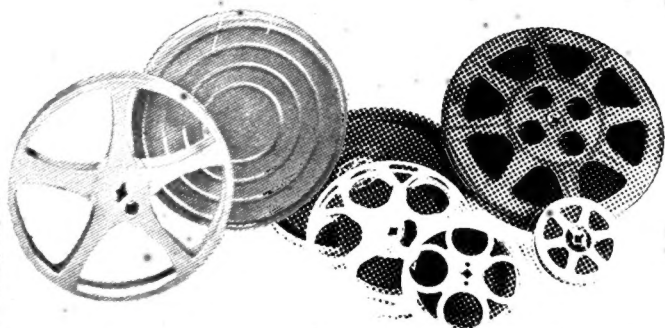
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STORAGE



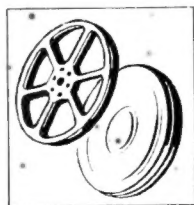
Films come in all kinds of cans and on all kinds of reels.



Sealed metal cans are **BAD** for long-term storage and can accelerate deterioration

and Vinegar Syndrome. If you're able to, put films on plastic*reels and in plastic*ventilated cans.

*look for inert Polypropylene!



Ultimately, films should be kept **COLD + DRY**. Avoid storing films in leaky basements, hot attics, or outdoor sheds (you also don't want bugs!)



FIRST SHOT. HIGH KEY LIGHTING, REVERSAL PROCESSED.



NEGATIVE PRINT OF 'A'. OVEREXPOSED, AND DEVELOPED IN CONTRASTY DEVELOPER.



HOW MAIN SCENE, SHOT THROUGH MASK STRIP 'B', WOULD LOOK IF PROCESSED.



FINAL STEP. - 'A' PRINTED ON 'C'. THEN 'C' REVERSAL PROCESSED.

• Diagrams show successive steps in the production of a trick mask shot. A represents initial shot, an arm and club filmed against black velvet. B shows film developed as a negative to produce the mask which is then wound on roll of reversal film and the scene photographed with the mask as shown at C. Final effect is shown at D.

FOR MORE RESOURCES:

